

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
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OMB-01 TRSE-00 FDRE-00 MCT-01 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00
A-01 OPR-02 /109 W

-----080268 191410Z /41

O R 191313Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7677
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USLO RIYADH
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
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FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2217

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, APRIL 19, 1300 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 2157 (DTG 171425Z APR 78)

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1. SUMMARY. SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM VISITED NAQURA AND TYRE ON APRIL 18. THE CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON AND AYN AR-RUMMANEH CONTINUED TO HOLD GENERALLY. BACHIR GEMAYEL TOLD THE PRESS THAT "THE UNITED FORCES HAVE DECIDED TO PROTECT THE AREAS IN WHICH THEY EXIST." TWO CHRISTIAN POLICEMEN WERE KILLED IN BEIRUT. THE SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON APRIL 20 HAS BEEN POSTPONED. PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS DENIED HE HAD TENDERED HIS RESIGNATION.

END SUMMARY.

2. VISIT OF WALDHEIM.

AFTER VISITING BEIRUT ON APRIL 17, SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM, FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS IN JERUSALEM, VISITED NAQURA AND TYRE ON APRIL 18. ACCORDING TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IKE, "A FEW HUNDRED" PALESTINIANS STAGED A BANNER-WAVING DEMONSTRATION FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AS HIS CAR PASSED BY RASHADIYAH CAMP ON THE WAY TO TYRE. THE DEMONSTRATORS DEMANDED IMMEDIATE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND "MANY" DISPLAYED CANISTERS OF AMERICAN-MADE CLUSTER BOMBS DROPPED IN THE AREA DURING THE ISRAELI INVASION, IKE REPORTED. IN TYRE, WALDHEIM INSPECTED THE U.N. CONTINGENT.

3. MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON.

THE CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON CONTINUES TO HOLD GENERALLY. ABOUT 2500 OF THE PLANNED UNIFIL FORCES OF 4,000 MEN ARE NOW IN PLACE IN THE AREA.

4. SITUATION IN AYN AR-RUMMANEH AND SHIAH.

THE CEASE-FIRE IN AYN AR-RUMMANEH AND SHIAH ALSO CONTINUES TO HOLD, ALTHOUGH ISOLATED INCIDENTS OF FIRING AND EXPLOSIONS CONTINUE. ACCORDING TO RIGHTIST LE REVEIL, FOR EXAMPLE, ON APRIL 17: (A) RIFLE AND ROCKET FIRE AT A PHALANGE BUREAU RESULTED IN THREE WOUNDED; (B) FOUR MORTAR ROUNDS FELL NEAR THE HOTEL DIEU AREA; AND (C) ARMED PPS SNIPERS FIRED AT SYRIAN FORCES. THERE IS AN AIR OF APPREHENSION IN BEIRUT THAT THERE WILL BE RENEWED VIOLENCE IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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NEXT FEW DAYS.

5. COMMENTS OF GEMAYELS ON AYN AR-RUMMANEH.

A. IN A STATEMENT CHALLENGING THE ADF, BACHIR GEMAYEL TOLD THE PRESS ON APRIL 17 THAT: "THE FORCES OF THE (RIGHTIST) UNITED COMMAND HAVE DECIDED TO PROTECT THE AREAS IN WHICH THEY EXIST" UNTIL THE GOL COMES TO AN UNDERSTANDING "FOR THE LAST TIME" WITH THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ADF ABOUT "THE MISSION, PRIVILEGES AND LIMITS OF THESE FORCES." BACHIR ADDED: "AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED, THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES ARE AS MUCH TO BLAME AS THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES FOR THE SHELLING OF AYN AR-RUMMANEH. THE AUTHORITIES' FAILURE TO PREVENT THE ADF FROM SHELLING AYN AR-RUMMANEH IS A POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY WHICH CANNOT BE IGNORED."

B. PHALANGE PARTY LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL HOWEVER SAID "THE SECURITY SITUATION IN AYN AR-RUMMANEH WAS GOOD," BUT THAT AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSE OF LAST WEEK'S CLASHES WAS REQUIRED. GEMAYEL, WHO MADE HIS STATEMENT AFTER MEETING WITH INTERIOR MINISTER SALAH SALMAN, SAID HE BELIEVED MISTAKES WERE MADE BY LEBANESE AND SYRIANS ALIKE. GEMAYEL SAID, "WE NEED A JUST TYRANT."

6. THE POLICEMEN KILLED.

TWO CHRISTIAN MEMBERS OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES WERE KILLED

WHEN AN UNIDENTIFIED GUNMAN OPENED FIRE ON A POLICE PATROL IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA ON APRIL 18. THE INCIDENT HAS PROVOKED WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT CHRISTIANS WILL NOW RETALIATE BY KILLING MUSLIM LEBANESE POLICEMEN. MEANWHILE, THE ADF HAS DENIED A REPORT ON PHALANGIST RADIO THAT THE BODIES OF THREE SYRIAN SOLDIERS WERE FOUND DEAD NEAR SABRA CAMP ON APRIL 18.

7. SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE POSTPONED.

THE SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 20 TO DISCUSS "VITAL ISSUES," INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON, WAS POSTPONED INDEFINITELY AS A RESULT OF TWO MEETINGS; THE FIRST BETWEEN NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN, PHALANGE PARTY LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER SA'EB SALAAM; THE SECOND BETWEEN 25 DEPUTIES REPRESENTING ALL CONFESSIONAL GROUPS. IKE PUT A GOOD
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FACE ON THE EVENT BY COMMENTING THAT "OVER THREE YEARS ACCUMULATION OF ICE WAS BROKEN IN ONE MORNING."

8. INCIPIENT GOVERNMENT CRISIS.

PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS ON APRIL 17 DENIED TO NEWSMEN A REPORT IN AN NAHAR THAT HE HAD SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION TO PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS AND HAD WITHDRAWN IT AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST. REPORTS NEVERTHELESS PERSISTED THAT HOSS HAD IN FACT TENDERED HIS RESIGNATION, AND HE HIMSELF ADDED SOMEWHAT EQUIVOCALLY, "WE ARE READY TO TAKE ANY STEP WHICH MIGHT SERVE PUBLIC INTEREST AT THIS STAGE." (SEPTAL NOTAL).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SECRETARY GENERAL, ARMISTICE, PRIME MINISTER, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SUMMARIES, VISITS, POLICE FORCES, DEATHS, ALLEGATIONS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT02217
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780167-0834
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780442/aaaabizw.tel
Line Count: 148
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fe968bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 2157
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2924422
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION, APRIL 19, 1300 HOURS LOCAL
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE, UN, (WALDHEIM, KURT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fe968bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014